POEMS OF ACTION

Gladys Porte

POEMS OF ACTION

SELECTED BY

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PREFACE

This anthology has been strictly confined to poems which relate a definite story of action; reflective and lyrical poems have been excluded, and even descriptive poems unless the description is markedly subordinate to action. The editor's own experience as a schoolmaster, supported by the views of a large acquaintance among teachers, has convinced him that poems chosen in this way are likelier to interest boys and girls, and to develop a love of poetry, than many of the pieces given in the usual school anthology; and that, in spite of the numerous collections already published, this method of selection has not been previously attempted—at all events so rigidly as in the present volume.

Every teacher knows that if a poem is to stir the young it is not sufficient that it should be simple in subject, simple in treatment, simple in diction, and simple in versification. It will still fall on deaf ears unless it can awaken an echo in the child's own mind. Such a poem, for instance, as Wordsworth's 'Daffodils' satisfies all the four conditions of simplicity; yet in most boys or girls of twelve, or even fourteen or fifteen years of age, it would fail to arouse interest. Natural scenery hardly appeals to them at that period; if they prefer fields to streets it is because in

the country they can run wild, climb trees, and have tea in a hayfield. Again with the love motive: the hero's falling in love with the heroine is only tolerated on condition that it is merely a peg on which there depend action and adventure. The truth is that everything of an introspective or lyrical nature, and almost anything in a minor key, runs the risk of leading the young to regard poetry as 'sentimental nonsense', and, at a stage when impressions are deepest and most lasting, of creating a prejudice which perhaps during the rest of life will never be removed. If, on the other hand, every poem to which the pupil's attention is drawn appeals to him by the interest of its action, there is some chance that when he is advanced to a book like Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* he will come to it with an unaffected anticipation of enjoyment.

As this book is not intended for pupils of the earliest age, a number of poems have been omitted of which otherwise the principle of selection would have demanded obvious inclusion. This applies specially to certain ballads.

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Robinson (Madame Duclaux) for 'A Ballad of Orleans'; to Mr. Henry Newbolt for 'A Ballad of John Nicholson'; to Mr. Alfred Noyes for 'The Highwayman' (permission confirmed by Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons); to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. for Robert Browning's 'Hervé Riel'; to Ellis for an extract from D. G. Rossetti's 'White Ship'; to Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Messrs. Methuen & Co. for 'A Ballad of East and West', from *Barrack Room Ballads*; and to Messrs. Chatto & Windus for 'Ramon' and 'Guild's Signal' from their edition of the complete works of Bret Harte.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
Horatius	*Lord Macaulay*	7
Jaffàr	*Leigh Hunt*	22
Kallundborg Church	*J. G. Whittier*	23
God's Judgement on a Wicked Bishop	*R. Southey*	27
The Gift of Tritemius	*J. G. Whittier*	30
The White Ship	*D. G. Rossetti*	32
Beth Gêlert	*W. R. Spencer*	37
The Inchcape Rock	*R. Southey*	41
King Robert of Sicily	*H. W. Longfellow*	44
The Jackdaw of Rheims	*Ingoldsby Legends*	52
The Pied Piper of Hamelin	*Robert Browning*	58
Creçy	*F. T. Palgrave*	69
A Ballad of Orleans	*A. M. F. Robinson*	71
Lochinvar	*Sir Walter Scott*	73
The Glove and the Lions	*Leigh Hunt*	75
David Gwynn's Story	*Theodore Watts-Dunton*	77
How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix	*Robert Browning*	85
Killiecrankie	*W. E. Aytoun*	88
Hervé Riel	*Robert Browning*	92
Winstanley	*Jean Ingelow*	99
The Ballad of 'Beau Brocade'	*Austin Dobson*	105
Fall of D'Assas	*F. Hemans*	115
Paul Revere's Ride	*H. W. Longfellow*	116
Battle of the Baltic	*T. Campbell*	121
Trafalgar	*F. T. Palgrave*	124
Incident of the French Camp	*Robert Browning*	130
The Highwayman	*Alfred Noyes*	131
The Charge of the Light Brigade	*Lord Tennyson*	138
A Ballad of John Nicholson	*Henry Newbolt*	140
The Pipes at Lucknow	*J. G. Whittier*	144
The Last Redoubt	*Alfred Austin*	147
Ramon	*Bret Harte*	149
Guild's Signal	*Bret Harte*	152
A Ballad of East and West	*Rudyard Kipling*	154

HORATIUS

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX

Lars Porsena of Clusium
  By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
  Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
  And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
  To summon his array.

East and west and south and north
  The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
  Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
  Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
  Is on the march for Rome.

And now hath every city
  Sent up her tale of men;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
  The horse are thousands ten:

Before the gates of Sutrium
  Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
  Upon the trysting day.

But by the yellow Tiber
  Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
  To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
  The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
  Through two long nights and days.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
  Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
  Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
  They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
  With tidings of dismay.

I wis, in all the Senate,
  There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached and fast it beat,
  When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
  Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
  And hied them to the wall.

They held a council standing
  Before the River-Gate;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
  For musing or debate.
Out spake the Consul roundly:
  'The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
  Naught else can save the town.'

Just then a scout came flying,
  All wild with haste and fear;
'To arms! to arms! Sir Consul:
  Lars Porsena is here.'
On the low hills to westward
  The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
  Rise fast along the sky.

And nearer fast and nearer
  Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
  The trampling, and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
  Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
  The long array of spears.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
  And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
  And darkly at the foe.
'Their van will be upon us
  Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
  What hope to save the town?'

Then out spake brave Horatius,
  The Captain of the Gate:
'To every man upon this earth
  Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
  Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
  And the temples of his Gods?

'Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
  With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
  Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
  May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
  And keep the bridge with me?'

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
  A Ramnian proud was he:
'Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
  And keep the bridge with thee.'

And out spake strong Herminius;
  Of Titian blood was he:
'I will abide on thy left side,
  And keep the bridge with thee.'

'Horatius,' quoth the Consul,
  'As thou sayest, so let it be.'
And straight against that great array
  Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
  Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
  In the brave days of old.

Now while the Three were tightening
  Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
  To take in hand an axe:
And Fathers mixed with Commons
  Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
  And loosed the props below.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
  Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
  Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
  A peal of warlike glee,

As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose:
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way;

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that grey crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath·
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth:

At Picus brave Horatius
  Darted one fiery thrust;
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
  Clashed in the bloody dust.
Then Ocnus of Falerii
  Rushed on the Roman Three;
And Lausulus of Urgo,
  The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
  Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
  Along Albinia's shore.

Herminius smote down Aruns:
  Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
  Horatius sent a blow.
'Lie there,' he cried, 'fell pirate!
  No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
  Thy thrice accursed sail.'

But now no sound of laughter
  Was heard among the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamour
  From all the vanguard rose.

Six spears' lengths from the entrance
  Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
  To win the narrow way.

But hark! the cry is Astur:
  And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
  Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
  Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
  Which none but he can wield.

He smiled on those bold Romans
  A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
  And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, 'The she-wolf's litter
  Stand savagely at bay:
But will ye dare to follow,
  If Astur clears the way?'

Then, whirling up his broadsword
  With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
  And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
  Right deftly turned the blow.

The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
  To see the red blood flow.

He reeled, and on Herminius
  He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
  Sprang right at Astur's face:
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet
  So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
  Behind the Tuscan's head.

And the great Lord of Luna
  Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
  A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
  The giant arms lie spread;
And the pale augurs, muttering low,
  Gaze on the blasted head.

On Astur's throat Horatius
  Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
  Ere he wrenched out the steel.
'And see', he cried, 'the welcome,
  Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
  To taste our Roman cheer?'

But at his haughty challenge
  A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread,
  Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
  Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
  Were round the fatal place.

But all Etruria's noblest
  Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
  In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
  Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
  Lies amidst bones and blood.

Was none who would be foremost
  To lead such dire attack:
But those behind cried 'Forward!'
  And those before cried 'Back!'
And backward now and forward
  Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel
  To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
  Dies fitfully away.

But meanwhile axe and lever
  Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
  Above the boiling tide.
'Come back, come back, Horatius!
  Loud cried the Fathers all.
'Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
  Back, ere the ruin fall!'

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
  Herminius darted back:
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
  They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
  And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
  They would have crossed once more.

But with a crash like thunder
  Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
  Lay right athwart the stream
And a long shout of triumph
  Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
  Was splashed the yellow foam.

And, like a horse unbroken
  When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
  And tossed his tawny mane,

And burst the curb, and bounded,
  Rejoicing to be free,
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
  Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
  But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
  And the broad flood behind.
'Down with him!' cried false Sextus,
  With a smile on his pale face.
'Now yield thee,' cried Lars Porsena,
  'Now yield thee to our grace.'

Round turned he, as not deigning
  Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
  To Sextus naught spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
  The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
  That rolls by the towers of Rome.

'Oh, Tiber! father Tiber!
  To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
  Take thou in charge this day!'
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
  The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back
  Plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow
  Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
  Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
  They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
  Could scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current,
  Swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing;
  And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armour,
  And spent with changing blows;
And oft they thought him sinking,
  But still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
  In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
  Safe to the landing place:
But his limbs were borne up bravely
  By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
  Bore bravely up his chin.

And now he feels the bottom ;
  Now on dry earth he stands ;
Now round him throng the Fathers
  To press his gory hands ;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
  And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
  Borne by the joyous crowd.

They gave him of the corn-land,
  That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
  Could plough from morn till night ;
And they made a molten image,
  And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
  To witness if I lie.

It stands in the Comitium,
  Plain for all folk to see ;
Horatius in his harness,
  Halting upon one knee :
And underneath is written,
  In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

And still his name sounds stirring
  Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
  To charge the Volscian home ;

And wives still pray to Juno
  For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
  In the brave days of old.

And in the nights of winter,
  When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
  Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
  Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
  Roar louder yet within;

When the oldest cask is opened,
  And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
  And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
  Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
  And the lads are shaping bows;

When the goodman mends his armour,
  And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
  Goes flashing through the loom;
With weeping and with laughter
  Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

LORD MACAULAY.

JAFFÀR.

Jaffàr, the Barmecide, the good Vizier,
The poor man's hope, the friend without a peer,
Jaffàr was dead, slain by a doom unjust;
And guilty Hàroun, sullen with mistrust
Of what the good and e'en the bad might say,
Ordained that no man living from that day
Should dare to speak his name on pain of death.—
All Araby and Persia held their breath.

All but the brave Mondeer.—He, proud to show
How far for love a grateful soul could go,
And facing death for very scorn and grief
(For his great heart wanted a great relief),
Stood forth in Bagdad, daily in the square
Where once had stood a happy house; and there
Harangued the tremblers at the scimitar
On all they owed to the divine Jaffàr.

'Bring me this man,' the caliph cried. The man
Was brought—was gazed upon. The mutes began
To bind his arms. 'Welcome, brave cords!' cried he;
'From bonds far worse Jaffàr delivered me;
From wants, from shames, from loveless household fears;
Made a man's eyes friends with delicious tears;
Restored me—loved me—put me on a par
With his great self. How can I pay Jaffàr?'

Hàroun, who felt that on a soul like this
The mightiest vengeance could but fall amiss,
Now deigned to smile, as one great lord of fate
Might smile upon another half as great.
He said, 'Let worth grow frenzied, if it will;
The caliph's judgement shall be master still.
Go: and since gifts thus move thee, take this gem,
The richest in the Tartar's diadem,
And hold the giver as thou deemest fit.'

'Gifts!' cried the friend. He took; and holding it
High tow'rds the heavens as though to meet his star,
Exclaimed, 'This too I owe to thee, Jaffàr!'

LEIGH HUNT.

KALLUNDBORG CHURCH

'BUILD at Kallundborg by the sea
A church as stately as church may be,
And there shalt thou wed my daughter fair,'
Said the Lord of Nesvek to Esbern Snare.

And the Baron laughed. But Esbern said,
'Though I lose my soul, I will Helva wed!'
And off he strode, in his pride of will,
To the Troll who dwelt in Ulshoi hill.

'Build, O Troll, a church for me
At Kallundborg by the mighty sea;
Build it stately, and build it fair,
Build it quickly,' said Esbern Snare.

But the sly Dwarf said, 'No work is wrought
By Trolls of the Hills, O man, for naught.
What wilt thou give for thy church so fair?'
'Set thy own price,' quoth Esbern Snare.

'When Kallundborg church is builded well,
Thou must the name of its builder tell,
Or thy heart and thy eyes must be my boon.'
'Build,' said Esbern, 'and build it soon.'

By night and by day the Troll wrought on;
He hewed the timbers, he piled the stone;
But day by day, as the walls rose fair,
Darker and sadder grew Esbern Snare.

He listened by night, he watched by day,
He sought and thought, but he dared not pray;
In vain he called on the Elle-maids shy,
And the Neck and the Nis gave no reply.

Of his evil bargain far and wide
A rumour ran through the country-side;
And Helva of Nesvek, young and fair,
Prayed for the soul of Esbern Snare.

And now the church was wellnigh done;
One pillar it lacked, and one alone;
And the grim Troll muttered, 'Fool thou art!
To-morrow gives me thy eyes and heart!'

By Kallundborg in black despair,
Through wood and meadow, walked Esbern Snare,
Till, worn and weary, the strong man sank
Under the birches on Ulshoi bank.

At his last day's work he heard the Troll
Hammer and delve in the quarry's hole;
Before him the church stood large and fair:
'I have builded my tomb,' said Esbern Snare.

And he closed his eyes the sight to hide,
When he heard a light step at his side:
'O Esbern Snare!' a sweet voice said,
'Would I might die now in thy stead!'

With a grasp by love and by fear made strong,
He held her fast, and he held her long;
With the beating heart of a bird afeard,
She hid her face in his flame-red beard.

'O love!' he cried, 'let me look to-day
In thine eyes ere mine are plucked away;
Let me hold thee close, let me feel thy heart
Ere mine by the Troll is torn apart!

'I sinned, O Helva, for love of thee!
Pray that the Lord Christ pardon me!'
But fast as she prayed, and faster still,
Hammered the Troll in Ulshoi hill.

He knew, as he wrought, that a loving heart
Was somehow baffling his evil art;
For more than spell of Elf or Troll
Is a maiden's prayer for her lover's soul.

And Esbern listened, and caught the sound
Of a Troll-wife singing underground:
'To-morrow comes Fine, father thine:
Lie still and hush thee, baby mine!

'Lie still, my darling! next sunrise
Thou'lt play with Esbern Snare's heart and eyes!'
'Ho! ho!' quoth Esbern, 'is that your game?
Thanks to the Troll-wife, I know his name!'

The Troll he heard him, and hurried on
To Kallundborg church with the lacking stone.
'Too late, Gaffer Fine!' cried Esbern Snare;
And Troll and pillar vanished in air!

That night the harvesters heard the sound
Of a woman sobbing underground,
And the voice of the Hill-Troll loud with blame
Of the careless singer who told his name.

Of the Troll of the Church they sing the rune
By the Northern Sea in the harvest moon;
And the fishers of Zealand hear him still
Scolding his wife in Ulshoi hill.

And seaward over its groves of birch
Still looks the tower of Kallundborg church,
Where, first at its altar, a wedded pair,
Stood Helva of Nesvek and Esbern Snare!

J. G. Whittier.

GOD'S JUDGEMENT ON A WICKED BISHOP

The summer and autumn had been so wet,
That in winter the corn was growing yet,
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last-year's store,
And all the neighbourhood could tell
His granaries were furnish'd well.

At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay;
He bade them to his great Barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flock'd from far and near;
The great Barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, and young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;
And while for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the Barn and burnt them all.

'I'faith 'tis an excellent bonfire!' quoth he,
'And the country is greatly obliged to me,
For ridding it in these times forlorn
Of Rats that only consume the corn.'

So then to his palace returned he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man;
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning as he enter'd the hall
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the Rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he look'd there came a man from his farm—
He had a countenance white with alarm;
'My Lord, I open'd your granaries this morn,
And the Rats had eaten all your corn.'

Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be,
'Fly! my Lord Bishop, fly,' quoth he,
'Ten thousand Rats are coming this way, . .
The Lord forgive you for yesterday!'

'I'll go to my tower on the Rhine,' replied he,
''Tis the safest place in Germany;
The walls are high and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong and the water deep.'

Bishop Hatto fearfully hasten'd away,
And he crost the Rhine without delay,
And reach'd his tower, and barr'd with care
All the windows, doors, and loop-holes there.

He laid him down and closed his eyes; . .
But soon a scream made him arise,
He started and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

He listen'd and look'd; . . it was only the Cat;
But the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear
At the Army of Rats that were drawing near

For they have swum over the river so deep,
And they have climb'd the shores so steep,
And up the Tower their way is bent,
To do the work for which they were sent.

They are not to be told by the dozen or score,
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more,
Such numbers had never been heard of before,
Such a judgement had never been witness'd of yore.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
As louder and louder drawing near
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

And in at the windows and in at the door,
And through the walls helter-skelter they pour,
And down from the ceiling and up through the floor,
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones;
They gnaw'd the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgement on him!

R. Southey.

THE GIFT OF TRITEMIUS

Tritemius of Herbipolis, one day,
While kneeling at the altar's foot to pray
Alone with God, as was his pious choice,
Heard from without a miserable voice,
A sound which seemed of all sad things to tell,
As of a lost soul crying out of hell.

Thereat the Abbot paused; the chain whereby
His thoughts went upward broken by that cry;

And, looking from the casement, saw below
A wretched woman, with grey hair a-flow,
And withered hands held up to him, who cried
For alms as one who might not be denied.

She cried, 'For the dear love of Him who gave
His life for ours, my child from bondage save,—
My beautiful, brave first-born, chained with slaves
In the Moor's galley, where the sun-smit waves
Lap the white walls of Tunis!'—'What I can
I give,' Tritemius said, 'my prayers.'—'O man
Of God!' she cried, for grief had made her bold,
'Mock me not thus; I ask not prayers, but gold.
Words will not serve me, alms alone suffice;
Even while I speak perchance my first-born dies.'

'Woman!' Tritemius answered, 'from our door
None go unfed, hence are we always poor;
A single soldo is our only store.
Thou hast our prayers;—what can we give thee more?'

'Give me', she said, 'the silver candlesticks
On either side of the great crucifix.
God well may spare them on His errands sped,
Or He can give you golden ones instead.'

Then spake Tritemius, 'Even as thy word,
Woman, so be it! (Our most gracious Lord,
Who loveth mercy more than sacrifice,
Pardon me if a human soul I prize

Above the gifts upon His altar piled!)
Take what thou askest, and redeem thy child.'

But his hand trembled as the holy alms
He placed within the beggar's eager palms;
And as she vanished down the linden shade,
He bowed his head and for forgiveness prayed.

So the day passed, and when the twilight came
He woke to find the chapel all aflame,
And, dumb with grateful wonder, to behold
Upon the altar candlesticks of gold!

J. G. Whittier.

THE WHITE SHIP

Henry I of England—November 25, 1120

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
  (*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
  (*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)

King Henry held it as life's whole gain
That after his death his son should reign.

And next with his son he sailed to France
To claim the Norman allegiance.

'Twas sworn and sealed, and the day had come
When the King and the Prince might journey home.

The King set sail with the eve's south wind,
And soon he left that coast behind.

The Prince and all his, a princely show,
Remained in the good White Ship to go.

With noble knights and with ladies fair,
With courtiers and sailors gathered there,
Three hundred living souls we were:

And I, Berold, was the meanest hind
In all that train to the Prince assign'd.

And now he cried: 'Bring wine from below;
Let the sailors revel ere yet they row:

'Our speed shall o'ertake my father's flight
Though we sail from the harbour at midnight.'

The rowers made good cheer without check;
The lords and ladies obeyed his beck;
The night was light, and they danced on the deck.

Swifter and swifter the White Ship sped
Till she flew as the spirit flies from the dead:

As white as a lily glimmered she
Like a ship's fair ghost upon the sea.

And the Prince cried, 'Friends, 'tis the hour to sing!
Is a songbird's course so swift on the wing?'

And under the winter stars' still throng,
From brown throats, white throats, merry and strong,
The knights and the ladies raised a song.

A song,—nay, a shriek that rent the sky,
That leaped o'er the deep!—the grievous cry
Of three hundred living that now must die.

An instant shriek that sprang to the shock
As the ship's keel felt the sunken rock.

'Tis said that afar—a shrill strange sigh—
The King's ships heard it and knew not why.

Pale Fitz-Stephen stood by the helm
'Mid all those folk that the waves must whelm.

A great King's heir for the waves to whelm,
And the helpless pilot pale at the helm!

The ship was eager and sucked athirst,
By the steady stab of the sharp reef pierc'd.

A moment the pilot's senses spin,—
The next he snatched the Prince 'mid the din,
Cut the boat loose, and the youth leaped in.

A few friends leaped with him, standing near.
'Row! the sea 's smooth and the night is clear!'

'What! none to be saved but these and I?'
'Row, row as you'd live! All here must die!'

Out of the churn of the choking ship,
Which the gulf grapples and the waves strip,
They struck with the strained oars' flash and dip.

'Twas then o'er the splitting bulwarks' brim
The Prince's sister screamed to him.

He gazed aloft, still rowing apace,
And through the whirled surf he knew her face.

To the toppling decks clave one and all
As a fly cleaves to a chamber-wall.

I, Berold, was clinging anear;
I prayed for myself and quaked with fear,
But I saw his eyes as he looked at her.

He knew her face and he heard her cry,
And he said, 'Put back! she must not die!'

And back with the current's force they reel
Like a leaf that 's drawn to a water-wheel.

'Neath the ship's travail they scarce might float,
But he rose and stood in the rocking boat.

Low the poor ship leaned on the tide:
O'er the naked keel as she best might slide,
The sister toiled to the brother's side.

He reached an oar to her from below,
And stiffened his arms to clutch her so.

But now from the ship some spied the boat,
And 'Saved!' was the cry from many a throat.

And down to the boat they leaped and fell:
It turned as a bucket turns in a well,
And nothing was there but the surge and swell.

The Prince that was and the King to come,
There in an instant gone to his doom,

Despite of all England's bended knee
And maugre the Norman fealty!

He was a Prince of lust and pride;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be King, he oft would vow,
He'd yoke the peasant to his own plough.
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
  (*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me,
  (*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)

D. G. Rossetti.

BETH GÊLERT

OR, THE GRAVE OF THE GREYHOUND.

THE spearmen heard the bugle sound,
And cheerly smiled the morn;
And many a brach, and many a hound,
Obeyed Llewelyn's horn.

And still he blew a louder blast,
And gave a lustier cheer;
'Come Gêlert, come, wert never last
Llewelyn's horn to hear.—

'Oh where does faithful Gêlert roam,
The flower of all his race;
So true, so brave, a lamb at home,
A lion in the chase?'

'Twas only at Llewelyn's board
The faithful Gêlert fed;
He watched, he served, he cheered his lord,
And sentinelled his bed.

In sooth he was a peerless hound,
The gift of royal John;
But, now no Gêlert could be found,
And all the chase rode on.

And now, as o'er the rocks and dells
  The gallant chidings rise,
All Snowdon's craggy chaos yells
  The many-mingled cries!

That day Llewelyn little loved
  The chase of hart and hare;
And scant and small the booty proved,
  For Gêlert was not there.

Unpleased Llewelyn homeward hied,
  When near the portal-seat,
His truant Gêlert he espied
  Bounding his lord to greet.

But when he gained his castle-door,
  Aghast the chieftain stood;
The hound all o'er was smeared with gore,
  His lips, his fangs, ran blood.

Llewelyn gazed with fierce surprise;
  Unused such looks to meet,
His favourite check'd his joyful guise,
  And crouched, and licked his feet.

Onward, in haste, Llewelyn passed
  And on went Gêlert too;
And still, where'er his eyes he cast,
  Fresh blood-gouts shocked his view.

O'erturned his infant's bed he found,
With blood-stained covert rent;
And all around the walls and ground
With recent blood besprent.

He called his child—no voice replied—
He searched with terror wild;
Blood, blood, he found on every side,
But nowhere found his child.

'Hell-hound! my child's by thee devoured,'
The frantic father cried;
And to the hilt his vengeful sword
He plunged in Gêlert's side.

His suppliant looks, as prone he fell,
No pity could impart;
But still his Gêlert's dying yell
Passed heavy o'er his heart.

Aroused by Gêlert's dying yell,
Some slumberer wakened nigh:—
What words the parent's joy could tell
To hear his infant's cry!

Concealed beneath a tumbled heap
His hurried search had missed,
All glowing from his rosy sleep,
The cherub boy he kissed.

Nor scath had he, nor harm, nor dread,
But, the same couch beneath,
Lay a gaunt wolf, all torn and dead,
Tremendous still in death.

Ah, what was then Llewelyn's pain!
For now the truth was clear;
His gallant hound the wolf had slain,
To save Llewelyn's heir.

Vain, vain, was all Llewelyn's woe:
'Best of thy kind, adieu!
The frantic blow which laid thee low
This heart shall ever rue.'

And now a gallant tomb they raise,
With costly sculpture decked;
And marbles storied with his praise,
Poor Gêlert's bones protect.

There never could the spearman pass,
Or forester, unmoved;
There, oft the tear-besprinkled grass
Llewelyn's sorrow proved.

And there he hung his horn and spear,
And there, as evening fell,
In fancy's ear he oft would hear
Poor Gêlert's dying yell.

And, till great Snowdon's rocks grow old,
  And cease the storm to brave,
The consecrated spot shall hold
  The name of 'Gêlert's grave'.

W. R. Spencer.

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be,
Her sails from heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock
The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay,
All things were joyful on that day;
The sea-birds scream'd as they wheel'd round,
And there was joyaunce in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green;
Sir Ralph the Rover walk'd his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float;
Quoth he, 'My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok.'

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound
The bubbles rose and burst around;
Quoth Sir Ralph, 'The next who comes to the Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok.'

Sir Ralph the Rover sail'd away,
He scour'd the seas for many a day;
And now grown rich with plunder'd store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the Sun on high;
The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,
So dark it is they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph, 'It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon.'

'Canst hear', said one, 'the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore.'
'Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell.'

They hear no sound, the swell is strong;
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—
'Oh Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock!'

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair;
He curst himself in his despair;
The waves rush in on every side,
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

R. Southey.

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Apparelled in magnificent attire,
With retinue of many a knight and squire,
On St. John's eve, at vespers, proudly sat
And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.
And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
He caught the words, '*Deposuit potentes*
De sede, et exaltavit humiles';
And slowly lifting up his kingly head
He to a learned clerk beside him said,
'What mean these words?' The clerk made answer
meet,
'He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree.'
Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
''Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,
There is no power can push me from my throne!'

And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep
Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night;
The church was empty, and there was no light,
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,
Lighted a little space before some saint.
He started from his seat and gazed around,
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.
He groped towards the door, but it was locked;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sounds re-echoed from the roof and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls.

At length the sexton, hearing from without
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, 'Who is there?'
Half-choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
'Open: 'tis I, the King! Art thou afraid?'
The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse,
'This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!'
Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;
A man rushed by him at a single stride,
Haggard, half-naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,
But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;
Rushed through the courtyard, thrusting in his rage
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form, and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!
It was an Angel; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden Angel recognize.

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his look of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes;
Then said, 'Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?'
To which King Robert answered, with a sneer,

'I am the King, and come to claim my own
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!'
And suddenly, at these audacious words,
Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;
The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,
'Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester, thou
Henceforth shall wear the bells and scalloped cape,
And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape;
Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,
And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!'

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,
They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;
A group of tittering pages ran before,
And as they opened wide the folding door,
His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
With the mock plaudits of 'Long live the King!'

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,
He said within himself, 'It was a dream!'
But the straw rustled as he turned his head,
There were the cap and bells beside his bed,
Around him rose the bare, discoloured walls,
Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,
And in the corner, a revolting shape,
Shivering and chattering sat the wretched ape.
It was no dream; the world he loved so much
Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again
To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;
Under the Angel's governance benign
The happy island danced with corn and wine,
And deep within the mountain's burning breast
Enceladus, the giant, was at rest.
Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
Dressed in the motley garb that Jesters wear,
With look bewildered and a vacant stare,
Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn,
By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,
His only friend the ape, his only food
What others left,—he still was unsubdued.
And when the Angel met him on his way,
And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,
Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel
The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
'Art thou the King?' the passion of his woe
Burst from him in resistless overflow,
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling
The haughty answer back, 'I am, I am the King!'

Almost three years were ended; when there came
Ambassadors of great repute and name
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane
By letter summoned them forthwith to come
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.

The Angel with great joy received his guests,
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
Then he departed with them o'er the sea
Into the lovely land of Italy,
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,
With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir
Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.

And lo! among the menials, in mock state,
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,
His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,
King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp and blare
Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square,
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,
'I am the King! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,
Is an impostor in a king's disguise.

Do you not know me? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin?'
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;
The Emperor, laughing, said, 'It is strange sport
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court!'
And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky;
The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,
And with new fervour filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw,
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendour saw;
He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
The land was made resplendent with his train,
Flashing along the towns of Italy
Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea.
And when once more within Palermo's wall,
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,

He heard the Angelus from convent towers,
As if the better world conversed with ours,
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
And with a gesture bade the rest retire;
And when they were alone, the Angel said,
'Art thou the King?' Then, bowing down his head,
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,
And meekly answered him: 'Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!'

The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
A holy light illumined all the place,
And through the open window, loud and clear,
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
Above the stir and tumult of the street:
'He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!'
And through the chant a second melody
Rose like the throbbing of a single string:
'I am an Angel, and thou art the King!'

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!
But all apparelled as in days of old,
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;
And when his courtiers came, they found him there
Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

H. W. Longfellow.

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair!
Bishop, and abbot, and prior were there;
Many a monk, and many a friar,
Many a knight, and many a squire,
With a great many more of lesser degree,—
In sooth a goodly company;
And they served the Lord Primate on bended knee.
Never, I ween,
Was a prouder seen,
Read of in books, or dreamt of in dreams,
Than the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims!

In and out
Through the motley rout,
That little Jackdaw kept hopping about;
Here and there
Like a dog in a fair,
Over comfits and cates,
And dishes and plates,
Cowl and cope, and rochet and pall,
Mitre and crosier! he hopp'd upon all!
With saucy air,
He perch'd on the chair
Where, in state, the great Lord Cardinal sat
In the great Lord Cardinal's great red hat;

And he peer'd in the face
Of his Lordship's Grace,
With a satisfied look, as if he would say,
'We two are the greatest folks here to-day!'
And the priests, with awe,
As such freaks they saw,
Said, 'The Devil must be in that little Jackdaw!'

The feast was over, the board was clear'd,
The flawns and the custards had all disappear'd,
And six little Singing-boys,—dear little souls!
In nice clean faces, and nice white stoles,
Came, in order due,
Two by two,
Marching that grand refectory through!
A nice little boy held a golden ewer,
Emboss'd and fill'd with water, as pure
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur,
Which a nice little boy stood ready to catch
In a fine golden hand-basin made to match.
Two nice little boys, rather more grown,
Carried lavender-water, and eau de Cologne;
And a nice little boy had a nice cake of soap,
Worthy of washing the hands of the Pope.
One little boy more
A napkin bore,
Of the best white diaper, fringed with pink,
And a Cardinal's Hat mark'd in 'permanent ink'.

The great Lord Cardinal turns at the sight
Of these nice little boys dress'd all in white:

From his finger he draws
His costly turquoise;
And, not thinking at all about little Jackdaws,
Deposits it straight
By the side of his plate,
While the nice little boys on his Eminence wait;
Till, when nobody 's dreaming of any such thing,
That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring!

There 's a cry and a shout,
And a deuce of a rout,
And nobody seems to know what they're about,
But the Monks have their pockets all turn'd inside out.
The Friars are kneeling,
And hunting, and feeling
The carpet, the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling.
The Cardinal drew
Off each plum-colour'd shoe,
And left his red stockings exposed to the view;
He peeps, and he feels
In the toes and the heels;
They turn up the dishes,—they turn up the plates,—
They take up the poker and poke out the grates,
—They turn up the rugs,
They examine the mugs:—
But, no!—no such thing;—
They can't find THE RING!
And the Abbot declared that, 'when nobody twigg'd it,
Some rascal or other had popp'd in, and prigg'd it!'

The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
He call'd for his candle, his bell, and his book!
  In holy anger, and pious grief,
  He solemnly cursed that rascally thief!
  He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed;
  From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head;
  He cursed him in sleeping, that every night
  He should dream of the devil, and wake in a fright;
  He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking,
  He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking;
  He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying;
  He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying,
  He cursed him in living, he cursed him in dying!—
Never was heard such a terrible curse!!
    But what gave rise
    To no little surprise,
Nobody seem'd one penny the worse!

    The day was gone,
    The night came on,
The Monks and the Friars they search'd till dawn;
    When the Sacristan saw,
    On crumpled claw,
Come limping a poor little lame Jackdaw!
    No longer gay,
    As on yesterday;
His feathers all seem'd to be turn'd the wrong way;—
His pinions droop'd—he could hardly stand,—
His head was as bald as the palm of your hand;

His eye so dim,
So wasted each limb,
That, heedless of grammar, they all cried, 'THAT'S HIM!—
That's the scamp that has done this scandalous thing!
That's the thief that has got my Lord Cardinal's Ring!'

The poor little Jackdaw,
When the Monks he saw,
Feebly gave vent to the ghost of a caw;
And turn'd his bald head, as much as to say
'Pray, be so good as to walk this way!'
Slower and slower
He limp'd on before,
Till they came to the back of the belfry door,
Where the first thing they saw,
Midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the RING in the nest of that little Jackdaw!

Then the great Lord Cardinal call'd for his book,
And off that terrible curse he took;
The mute expression
Served in lieu of confession,
And, being thus coupled with full restitution,
The Jackdaw got plenary absolution!
—When those words were heard,
That poor little bird
Was so changed in a moment, 'twas really absurd.

He grew sleek, and fat;
In addition to that,
A fresh crop of feathers came thick as a mat!
His tail waggled more
Even than before;
But no longer it wagg'd with an impudent air,
No longer he perch'd on the Cardinal's chair.
He hopp'd now about
With a gait devout;
At Matins, at Vespers, he never was out;
And, so far from any more pilfering deeds,
He always seem'd telling the Confessor's beads.
If any one lied,—or if any one swore,—
Or slumber'd in pray'r-time and happen'd to snore,
That good Jackdaw
Would give a great 'Caw!'
As much as to say, 'Don't do so any more!'
While many remark'd, as his manners they saw,
That they 'never had known such a pious Jackdaw!'
He long lived the pride
Of that country-side,
And at last in the odour of sanctity died;
When, as words were too faint
His merits to paint,
The Conclave determined to make him a Saint;
And on newly made Saints and Popes, as you know,
It 's the custom, at Rome, new names to bestow,
So they canonized him by the name of Jim Crow!

Ingoldsby Legends.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Hamelin Town 's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
''Tis clear,' cried they, 'our Mayor 's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine

For dolts that can't or won't determine
What 's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!'
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sate in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
'For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It 's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!'
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
'Bless us,' cried the Mayor, 'what 's that?'
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
'Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!'

'Come in!'—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire:
Quoth one: 'It 's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone!'

He advanced to the council-table:
And, 'Please your honours,' said he, 'I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper.'
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;

And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
'Yet,' said he, 'poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?'
'One? fifty thousand!'— was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept,
  Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
  In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,

Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
  Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
  Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary:
Which was, 'At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tubboards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, Oh rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So, munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone

Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, Come, bore me!
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me.'

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
'Go,' cried the Mayor, 'and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!'—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, 'First, if you please, my thousand guilders!'

A thousand guilders. The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
'Beside,' quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
'Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what 's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke

Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!'

The piper's face fell, and he cried,
'No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor—
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion.'

'How?' cried the Mayor, 'd'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!'

Once more he stept into the street;
  And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
  And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
  Never gave the enraptured air)

There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by—
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
'He never can cross that mighty top!

He 's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!
When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
'It 's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the Hill,
Left alone against my will,

To go now limping as before
And never hear of that country more!'

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
 There came into many a burgher's pate
 A text which says, that Heaven's Gate
 Opes to the Rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
 Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
 And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
 Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
'And so long after what happened here
 On the Twenty-second of Július,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six:'
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn;

But opposite the place of the cavern
  They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great Church-Window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers:
And, whether they pipe us free, from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

R. Browning.

CREÇY

At Creçy by Somme in Ponthieu
  High up on a windy hill
A mill stands out like a tower;
  King Edward stands on the mill.
The plain is seething below
  As Vesuvius seethes with flame,
But O! not with fire, but gore,
Earth incarnadined o'er,
  Crimson with shame and with fame:—
To the King run the messengers, crying
'Thy Son is hard-press'd to the dying!'
—'Let alone: for to-day will be written in story
  To the great world's end, and for ever:
    So let the boy have the glory.'

Erin and Gwalia there
  With England are rank'd against France;
Outfacing the oriflamme red
  The red dragons of Merlin advance:—
As a harvest in autumn renew'd
  The lances bend o'er the fields;
Snow-thick our arrow-heads white
Level the foe as they light;
  Knighthood to yeomanry yields:—

Proud heart, the King watches, as higher
Goes the blaze of the battle, and nigher :—
'To-day is a day will be written in story
To the great world's end, and for ever!
Let the boy alone have the glory.'

Harold at Senlac-on-Sea
By Norman arrow laid low,—
When the shield-wall was breach'd by the shaft,
—Thou art avenged by the bow!
Chivalry! name of romance!
Thou art henceforth but a name!
Weapon that none can withstand,
Yew in the Englishman's hand,
Flight-shaft unerring in aim!
As a lightning-struck forest the foemen
Shiver down to the stroke of the bowmen :—
—'O to-day is a day will be written in story
To the great world's end, and for ever!
So, let the boy have the glory.'

Pride of Liguria's shore
Genoa wrestles in vain;
Vainly Bohemia's King
Kinglike is laid with the slain.
The Blood-lake is wiped out in blood,
The shame of the centuries o'er;
Where the pride of the Norman had sway
The lions lord over the fray,
The legions of France are no more :—

—The Prince to his father kneels lowly;
—'His is the battle! his wholly!
For to-day is a day will be written in story
To the great world's end, and for ever:—
So, let him have the spurs, and the glory!'

F. T. Palgrave.

A BALLAD OF ORLEANS

The fray began at the middle-gate,
Between the night and the day;
Before the matin bell was rung
The foe was far away.
No knight in all the land of France
Could gar that foe to flee,
Till up there rose a young maiden,
And drove them to the sea.

Sixty forts around Orleans town,
And sixty forts of stone!
Sixty forts at our gates last night—
To-day there is not one!

Talbot, Suffolk, and Pole are fled
Beyond the Loire, in fear—
Many a captain who would not drink
Hath drunken deeply there—

Many a captain is fallen and drowned,
And many a knight is dead,
And many die in the misty dawn
While the forts are burning red.

Sixty forts around Orleans town, &c.

The blood ran off our spears all night
As the rain runs off the roofs—
God rest their souls that fell i' the fight
Among our horses' hoofs!
They came to rob us of our own
With sword and spear and lance,
They fell and clutched the stubborn earth,
And bit the dust of France!

Sixty forts around Orleans town, &c.

We fought across the moonless dark
Against their unseen hands—
A knight came out of Paradise
And fought among our bands.
Fight on, O maiden knight of God!
Fight on and never tire,
For lo! the misty break o' the day
Sees all their forts on fire!

Sixty forts around Orleans town, &c.

A. M. F. Robinson.

LOCHINVAR

O, YOUNG Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)
'O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'

'I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.'

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
'Now tread we a measure!' said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, ''Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:

There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

KING FRANCIS was a hearty king, and loved a royal sport,
And one day as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;
The nobles fill'd the benches, with the ladies in their pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with one for whom he sighed:
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show,
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal beasts below.

Ramped and roared the lions, with horrid laughing jaws;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a wind went with their paws;
With wallowing might and stifled roar they rolled on one another,
Till all the pit, with sand and mane, was in a thunderous smother;

The bloody foam above the bars came whisking through the air;
Said Francis then, 'Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there!'

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a beauteous, lively dame,
With smiling lips, and sharp bright eyes, which always seem'd the same:
She thought, 'The Count, my lover, is brave as brave can be;
He surely would do wondrous things to show his love of me!
King, ladies, lovers, all look on; the occasion is divine,
I'll drop my glove to prove his love; great glory will be mine!'

She dropped her glove to prove his love: then looked at him and smiled;
He bowed, and in a moment leaped among the lions wild!
The leap was quick; return was quick; he has regained his place;
Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in the lady's face!
'By Heav'n!' said Francis, 'rightly done!' and he rose from where he sat:
'No love,' quoth he, 'but vanity, sets love a task like that!'

LEIGH HUNT.

DAVID GWYNN'S STORY

OF HOW HE AND THE GOLDEN SKELETON CRIPPLED THE GREAT ARMADA SAILING OUT

'A GALLEY lie' they called my tale; but he
  Whose talk is with the deep kens mighty tales:
The man, I say, who helped to keep you free
  Stands here, a truthful son of truthful Wales.
Slandered by England as a loose-lipped liar,
  Banished from Ireland, branded rogue and thief,
Here stands that Gwynn whose life of torments dire
Heaven sealed for England, sealed in blood and fire—
  Stands asking here Truth's one reward, belief!

And Spain shall tell, with pallid lips of dread,
  This tale of mine—shall tell, in future days,
How Gwynn, the galley-slave, once fought and bled
  For England when she moved in perilous ways;
But say, ye gentlemen of England, sprung
  From loins of men whose ghosts have still the sea—
Doth England—she who loves the loudest tongue—
Remember mariners whose deeds are sung
  By waves where flowed their blood to keep her free?

I see—I see ev'n now—those ships of Spain
  Gathered in Tagus' mouth to make the spring;
I feel the cursèd oar, I toil again,
  And trumpets blare, and priests and choir-boys sing,

And morning strikes with many a crimson shaft,
  Through ruddy haze, four galleys rowing out—
Four galleys built to pierce the English craft,
Each swivel-gunned for raking fore and aft,
  Snouted like sword-fish, but with iron snout.

And one we call the *Princess*, one the *Royal*,
  Diana one; but 'tis the fell *Basana*
Where I am toiling, Gwynn, the true, the loyal,
  Thinking of mighty Drake and Gloriana;
For by their help Hope whispers me that I—
  Whom ten hours' daily travail at a stretch
Has taught how sweet a thing it is to die—
May strike once more where flags of England fly,
  Strike for myself and many a haggard wretch.

True sorrow knows a tale it may not tell
  Again I feel the lash that tears my back;
Again I hear mine own blaspheming yell,
  Answered by boatswain's laugh and scourge's crack;
Again I feel the pang when trying to choke
  Rather than drink the wine, or chew the bread
Wherewith, when rest for meals would break the stroke,
They cram our mouths while still we sit at yoke;
  Again is Life, not Death, the shape of dread.

By Finisterre there comes a sudden gale,
  And mighty waves assault our trembling galley
With blows that strike her waist as strikes a flail,
  And soldiers cry, 'What saint shall bid her rally?'

Some slaves refuse to row, and some implore
  The Dons to free them from the metal tether
By which their limbs are locked upon the oar;
Some shout, in answer to the billows' roar,
  'The Dons and we will drink brine-wine together.'

'Bring up the slave,' I hear the captain cry,
  'Who sank the golden galleon *El Dorado.*
The dog can steer.'
                    'Here sits the dog,' quoth I,
  'Who sank the ship of Commodore Medrado!'
With hell-lit eyes, blistered by spray and rain,
  Standing upon the bridge, saith he to me:
'Hearken, thou pirate—bold Medrado's bane!—
Freedom and gold are thine, and thanks of Spain,
  If thou canst take the galley through this sea.'

'Ay! ay!' quoth I. The fools unlock me straight!
  And then 'tis I give orders to the Don,
Laughing within to hear the laugh of Fate,
  Whose winning game I know hath just begun.
I mount the bridge when dies the last red streak
  Of evening, and the moon seems fain for night.
Oh then I see beneath the galley's beak
A glow like Spanish *auto's* ruddy reek—
  Oh then these eyes behold a wondrous sight!

A skeleton, but yet with living eyes—
  A skeleton, but yet with bones like gold—
Squats on the galley-beak, in wondrous wise,
  And round his brow, of high imperial mould,

A burning circle seems to shake and shine,
Bright, fiery bright, with many a living gem,
Throwing a radiance o'er the foam-lit brine:
''Tis God's Revenge,' methinks. 'Heaven sends for sign
That bony shape—that Inca's diadem.'

At first the sign is only seen of me,
But well I know that God's Revenge hath come
To strike the Armada, set old ocean free,
And cleanse from stain of Spain the beauteous foam.
Quoth I, 'How fierce soever be the levin
Spain's hand can hurl—made mightier still for wrong
By that great Scarlet One whose hills are seven—
Yea, howsoever Hell may scoff at Heaven—
Stronger than Hell is God, though Hell is strong.'

'The dog can steer,' I laugh: 'yea, Drake's men know
How sea-dogs hold a ship to Biscay waves.'
Ah! when I bid the soldiers go below,
Some 'neath the hatches, some beside the slaves,
And bid them stack their muskets all in piles
Beside the foremast, covered by a sail,
The captives guess my plan—I see their smiles
As down the waist the cozened troop defiles,
Staggering and stumbling landsmen, faint and pale.

I say, they guess my plan—to send beneath
The soldiers to the benches where the slaves
Sit, armed with eager nails and eager teeth—
Hate's nails and teeth more keen than Spanish glaives,

Then wait until the tempest's waxing might
  Shall reach its fiercest, mingling sea and sky,
Then seize the key, unlock the slaves, and smite
The sea-sick soldiers in their helpless plight,
  Then bid the Spaniards pull at oar or die.

Past Ferrol Bay each galley 'gins to stoop,
  Shuddering before the Biscay demon's breath.
Down goes a prow—down goes a gaudy poop:
  'The Don's *Diana* bears the Don to death,'
Quoth I, 'and see the *Princess* plunge and wallow
  Down purple trough, o'er snowy crest of foam:
See! See! the *Royal*, how she tries to follow
By many a glimmering crest and shimmering hollow,
  Where gull and petrel scarcely dare to roam.'

Now, three queen-galleys pass Cape Finisterre;
  The Armada, dreaming but of ocean-storms,
Thinks not of mutineers with shoulders bare,
  Chained, bloody-wealed and pale, on galley-forms,
Each rower murmuring o'er my whispered plan,
  Deep-burnt within his brain in words of fire,
'Rise, every man, to tear to death his man—
Yea, tear as only galley-captives can,
  When God's Revenge sings loud to ocean's lyre.'

Taller the spectre grows 'mid ocean's din;
  The captain sees the Skeleton and pales:
I give the sign: the slaves cry, 'Ho, for Gwynn!'
  'Teach them', quoth I, 'the way we grip in Wales.'

And, leaping down where hateful boatswains shake,
I win the key—let loose a storm of slaves:
'When captives hold the whip, let drivers quake,'
They cry; 'sit down, ye Dons, and row for Drake,
Or drink to England's Queen in foaming waves.'

We leap adown the hatches; in the dark
We stab the Dons at random, till I see
A spark that trembles like a tinder-spark,
Waxing and brightening, till it seems to be
A fleshless skull, with eyes of joyful fire:
Then, lo! a bony shape with lifted hands—
A bony mouth that chants an anthem dire,
O'ertopping groans, o'ertopping Ocean's quire—
A skeleton with Inca's diadem stands!

It sings the song I heard an Indian sing,
Chained by the ruthless Dons to burn at stake,
When priests of Tophet chanted in a ring,
Sniffing man's flesh at roast for Christ His sake.
The Spaniards hear: they see: they fight no more;
They cross their foreheads, but they dare not speak.
Anon the spectre, when the strife is o'er,
Melts from the dark, then glimmers as before,
Burning upon the conquered galley's beak.

And now the moon breaks through the night, and shows
The *Royal* bearing down upon our craft—
Then comes a broadside close at hand, which strows
Our deck with bleeding bodies fore and aft.

I take the helm ; I put the galley near :
We grapple in silver sheen of moonlit surge.
Amid the *Royal's* din I laugh to hear
The curse of many a British mutineer,
The crack, crack, crack of boatswain's biting scourge.

'Ye scourge in vain,' quoth I, 'scourging for life
Slaves who shall row no more to save the Don';
For from the *Royal's* poop, above the strife,
Their captain gazes at our Skeleton!
'What! is it thou, Pirate of *El Dorado*?'
He shouts in English tongue. And there, behold!
Stands he, the devil's commodore, Medrado.
'Ay! ay!' quoth I, 'Spain owes me one strappado
For scuttling Philip's ship of stolen gold.

'I come for that strappado now,' quoth I.
'What means yon thing of burning bones?' he saith.
''Tis God's Revenge cries "Bloody Spain shall die!"
The king of El Dorado's name is Death.
Strike home, ye slaves; your hour is coming swift.'
I cry; 'strong hands are stretched to save you now;
Show yonder spectre you are worth the gift.'
But when the *Royal*, captured, rides adrift,
I look: the Skeleton hath left our prow.

When all are slain, the tempest's wings have fled,
But still the sea is dreaming of the storm:
Far down the offing glows a spot of red,
My soul knows well it hath that Inca's form.

'It lights,' quoth I, 'the red cross banner of Spain:
There on the flagship where Medina sleeps—
Hell's banner, wet with sweat of Indians' pain,
And tears of women yoked to treasure train,
Scarlet of blood for which the New World weeps.'

There on the dark the flagship of the Don
To me seems luminous of the spectre's glow;
But soon an arc of gold, and then the Sun,
Rise o'er the reddening billows, proud and slow;
Then, through the curtains of the morning mist,
That take all shifting colours as they shake,
I see the great Armada coil and twist
Miles, miles along the ocean's amethyst,
Like hell's old snake of hate—the wingèd snake.

And, when the hazy veils of Morn are thinned,
That snake accursed, with wings which swell and puff
Before the slackening horses of the wind,
Turns into shining ships that tack and luff.
'Behold', quoth I, 'their floating citadels,
The same the priests have vouched for musket-proof,
Caracks and hulks and nimble caravels,
That sailed with us to sound of Lisbon bells—
Yea, sailed from Tagus' mouth, for Christ's behoof.

For Christ's behoof they sailed: see how they go
With that red skeleton to show the way
There sitting on Medina's stem aglow—
A hundred sail and forty-nine, men say;

Behold them, brothers, galleon and galleasse—
 Their dizened turrets bright of many a plume,
Their gilded poops, their shining guns of brass,
Their trucks, their flags—behold them, how they pass—
 With God's Revenge for figurehead—to Doom!'

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

'HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX'

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
'Good speed!' cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
'Speed!' echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, 'Yet there is time!'

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, 'Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix'—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,

And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And 'Gallop,' gasped Joris, 'for Aix is in sight!'

'How they'll greet us!'—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;

And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of
wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news
from Ghent.

ROBERT BROWNING.

KILLIECRANKIE

On the heights of Killiecrankie
Yester-morn our army lay:
Slowly rose the mist in columns
From the river's broken way;
Hoarsely roared the swollen torrent,
And the Pass was wrapt in gloom,
When the clansmen rose together
From their lair amidst the broom.
Then we belted on our tartans,
And our bonnets down we drew,
And we felt our broadswords' edges,
And we proved them to be true;
And we prayed the prayer of soldiers,
And we cried the gathering-cry,
And we clasped the hands of kinsmen,
And we swore to do or die!
Then our leader rode before us
On his war-horse black as night—
Well the Cameronian rebels
Knew that charger in the fight!—

And a cry of exultation
  From the bearded warriors rose;
For we loved the house of Claver'se,
  And we thought of good Montrose.
But he raised his hand for silence—
  'Soldiers! I have sworn a vow:
Ere the evening star shall glisten
  On Schehallion's lofty brow,
Either we shall rest in triumph,
  Or another of the Græmes
Shall have died in battle-harness
  For his country and King James!
Think upon the Royal Martyr—
  Think of what his race endure—
Think of him whom butchers murdered
  On the field of Magus Muir:—
By his sacred blood I charge ye,
  By the ruined hearth and shrine—
By the blighted hopes of Scotland,
  By your injuries and mine—
Strike this day as if the anvil
  Lay beneath your blows the while,
Be they covenanting traitors,
  Or the brood of false Argyle!
Strike! and drive the trembling rebels
  Backward o'er the stormy Forth;
Let them tell their pale Convention
  How they fared within the North.
Let them tell that Highland honour
  Is not to be bought nor sold,

That we scorn their prince's anger
  As we loathe his foreign gold.
Strike! and when the fight is over,
  If ye look in vain for me,
Where the dead are lying thickest,
  Search for him that was Dundee!'

Loudly then the hills re-echoed
  With our answer to his call,
But a deeper echo sounded
  In the bosoms of us all.
For the lands of wide Breadalbane,
  Not a man who heard him speak
Would that day have left the battle.
  Burning eye and flushing cheek
Told the clansmen's fierce emotion,
  And they harder drew their breath;
For their souls were strong within them,
  Stronger than the grasp of death.
Soon we heard a challenge-trumpet
  Sounding in the Pass below,
And the distant tramp of horses,
  And the voices of the foe:
Down we crouched amid the bracken,
  Till the Lowland ranks drew near,
Panting like the hounds in summer,
  When they scent the stately deer.
From the dark defile emerging,
  Next we saw the squadrons come,

Leslie's foot and Leven's troopers
  Marching to the tuck of drum;
Through the scattered wood of birches,
  O'er the broken ground and heath,
Wound the long battalion slowly,
  Till they gained the plain beneath;
Then we bounded from our covert.—
  Judge how looked the Saxons then,
When they saw the rugged mountain
  Start to life with armèd men!
Like a tempest down the ridges
  Swept the hurricane of steel,
Rose the slogan of Macdonald—
  Flashed the broadsword of Lochiel!
Vainly sped the withering volley
  'Mongst the foremost of our band—
On we poured until we met them,
  Foot to foot, and hand to hand.
Horse and man went down like drift-wood
  When the floods are black at Yule,
And their carcasses are whirling
  In the Garry's deepest pool.
Horse and man went down before us—
  Living foe there tarried none
On the field of Killiecrankie,
  When that stubborn fight was done!

And the evening star was shining
  On Schehallion's distant head,

When we wiped our bloody broadswords,
  And returned to count the dead.
There we found him gashed and gory,
  Stretched upon the cumbered plain,
As he told us where to seek him,
  In the thickest of the slain.
And a smile was on his visage,
  For within his dying ear
Pealed the joyful note of triumph,
  And the clansmen's clamorous cheer:
So, amidst the battle's thunder,
  Shot, and steel, and scorching flame,
In the glory of his manhood
  Passed the spirit of the Græme!

W. E. Aytoun.

HERVÉ RIEL

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
  Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter thro' the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
  Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place
'Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here 's the English can and will!'

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
'Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?' laughed they:
'Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the *Formidable* here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!'

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
'Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!'
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
Not a minute more to wait!
'Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

Give the word!' But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

And, 'What mockery or malice have we here?' cries Hervé Riel:

'Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying 's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.

Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there 's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this *Formidable* clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life,—here 's my head!' cries Hervé Riel.

Not a minute more to wait.
'Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!' cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face,
As the big ship with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide seas profound!
See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harboured to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas 'Anchor!'—sure as fate
Up the English come, too late!

So, the storm subsides to calm:
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
'Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance,
As they cannonade away!

'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the
Rance!'
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
Out burst all with one accord,
'This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!'
What a shout, and all one word,
'Hervé Riel!'
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

Then said Damfreville, 'My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not
Damfreville.'

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:

'Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty 's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?—
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!'
That he asked and that he got,—nothing more.

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife, the Belle Aurore!

ROBERT BROWNING.

WINSTANLEY

WINSTANLEY's deed, you kindly folk,
  With it I fill my lay,
And a nobler man ne'er walked the world,
  Let his name be what it may.

The good ship *Snowdrop* tarried long,
  Up at the vane looked he;
'Belike,' he said, for the wind had dropped,
  'She lieth becalmed at sea.'

Then stepped two mariners down the street,
  With looks of grief and fear:
'Now, if Winstanley be your name,
  We bring you evil cheer!

'For the good ship *Snowdrop* struck—she struck
  On the rock—the Eddystone,
And down she went with threescore men,
  We two being left alone.'

'O thou brave skipper, blithe and kind,
  O mariners bold and true,
Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,
  A-thinking of yours and you.'

The *Snowdrop* sank at Lammas tide,
All under the yeasty spray;
On Christmas Eve the brig *Content*
Was also cast away.

He little thought o' New Year's night,
So jolly as he sat then,
While drank the toast and praised the roast
The round-faced Aldermen,—

He little thought on Plymouth Hoe,
With every rising tide,
How the wave washed in his sailor lads,
And laid them side by side.

There stepped a stranger to the board:
'Now, stranger, who be ye?'
'He looked to right, he looked to left,
And 'Rest you merry,' quoth he;

'For you did not see the brig go down,
Or ever a storm had blown;
For you did not see the white waves rear
At the rock—the Eddystone.

'She drave at the rock with sternsails set;
Crash went the masts in twain;
She staggered back with her mortal blow,
Then leaped at it again.

'There rose a great cry, bitter and strong,
  The misty moon looked out!
And the water swarmed with seamen's heads,
  And the wreck was strewed about.

'I saw her mainsail lash the sea
  As I clung to the rock alone;
Then she heeled over, and down she went,
  And sank like any stone.

'She was a fair ship, but all 's one!
  For naught could bide the shock!'
'I will take horse,' Winstanley said,
  'And see this deadly rock.'

Winstanley rode to Plymouth town
  All in the sleet and snow,
And he looked around on shore and sound
  As he stood on Plymouth Hoe.

Till a pillar of spray rose far away,
  And shot up its stately head,
Reared and fell over, and reared again:
  ''Tis the rock! the rock!' he said.

Straight to the Mayor he took his way,
  'Good Master Mayor,' quoth he,
'I am a mercer of London town,
  And owner of vessels three,—

'But for your rock of dark renown,
I had five to track the main.'
'You are one of many,' the old Mayor said,
'That on the rock complain.'

'Lend me a lighter, good Master Mayor,
And a score of shipwrights free,
For I think to raise a lantern tower
On this rock o' destiny.'

The old Mayor looked him in the face,
And answered: 'Have thy way;
Thy heart is stout, as if round about
It was braced with an iron stay.'

Winstanley chose him men and gear;
He said, 'My time I waste,'
For the seas ran seething up the shore,
And the wrack drave on in haste.

Then he and the sea began their strife,
And worked with power and might:
Whatever the man reared up by day
The sea broke down by night.

In fine weather and foul weather
The rock his arts did flout,
Through the long days and the short days,
Till all that year ran out.

Now March was gone, came April in,
  And a sea-fog settled down,
And forth sailed he on a glassy sea,
  He sail'd from Plymouth town.

A Scottish schooner made the port,
  The thirteenth day at e'en:
'As I am a man,' the captain cried,
  'A strange sight I have seen:

'And a strange sound heard, my masters all,
  At sea in the fog and the rain,
Like shipwrights' hammers tapping low,
  Then loud, then low again.

'And a stately house one instant showed,
  Through a rift, on the vessel's lee:
What manner of creatures may be those
  That build upon the sea?'

Then sighed the folk, 'The Lord be praised!'
  And they flocked to the shore amain;
All over the Hoe that livelong night,
  Many stood out in the rain.

It ceased, and the red sun reared his head,
  And the rolling fog did flee;
And, lo! in the offing faint and far
  Winstanley's house at sea!

In fair weather, with mirth and cheer,
  The stately tower uprose;
In foul weather, with hunger and cold,
  They were content to close;

Till up the stair Winstanley went,
  To fire the wick afar;
And Plymouth in the silent night
  Look'd out and saw her star.

Winstanley set his foot ashore:
  Said he, 'My work is done;
I hold it strong to last as long
  As aught beneath the sun.

'But if it fail, as fail it may,
  Borne down with ruin and rout,
Another than I shall rear it high,
  And brace the girders stout.

'A better than I shall rear it high,
  For now the way is plain,
And tho' I were dead,' Winstanley said,
  'The light would shine again.'

With that Winstanley went his way,
  And left the rock renowned,
And summer and winter his pilot star
  Hung bright o'er Plymouth Sound.

But it fell out, fell out at last,
  That he would put to sea,
To scan once more his lighthouse tower
  On the rock o' destiny.

And the winds woke, and the storm broke,
  And wrecks came plunging in ;
None in the town that night lay down,
  Or sleep or rest to win.

And when the dawn, the dull, grey dawn,
  Broke on the trembling town,
And men looked south to the harbour mouth,
  The lighthouse tower was down.

Down in the deep where he doth sleep,
  Who made it shine afar,
And then in the night that drowned its light,
  Set, with his pilot star.

JEAN INGELOW.

THE BALLAD OF 'BEAU BROCADE'

'*Hark! I hear the sound of coaches!*'—BEGGAR'S OPERA.

I

SEVENTEEN hundred and thirty-nine:—
That was the date of this tale of mine.

First great GEORGE was buried and gone;
GEORGE the Second was plodding on.

LONDON then, as the 'Guides' aver,
Shared its glories with *Westminster*;

And people of rank to correct their 'tone',
Went out of town to *Marybone*.

Those were the days of the War with *Spain*,
PORTO-BELLO would soon be ta'en;

WHITEFIELD preached to the colliers grim,
Bishops in lawn sleeves preached at him;

WALPOLE talked of 'a man and his price';
Nobody's virtue was over-nice;

Those, in fine, were the brave days when
Coaches were stopped by . . . *Highwaymen*!

And of all the knights of the gentle trade
Nobody bolder than 'BEAU BROCADE'.

This they knew on the whole way down;
Best,—maybe,—at the '*Oak and Crown*'.

(For timorous cits on their pilgrimage
Would 'club' for a 'Guard' to ride the stage;

And the Guard that rode on more than one
Was the Host of this hostel's sister's son.)

Open we here on a March day fine,
Under the oak with the hanging sign.

There was Barber Dick with his basin by;
Cobbler Joe with the patch on his eye;

Portly product of Beef and Beer,
John the host, he was standing near.

Straining and creaking, with wheels awry,
Lumbering came the '*Plymouth Fly*';—

Lumbering up from *Bagshot Heath*,
Guard in the basket armed to the teeth;

Passengers heavily armed inside;
Not the less surely the coach had been tried!

Tried!—but a couple of miles away,
By a well-dressed man!—in the open day!

Tried successfully, never a doubt,—
Pockets of passengers all turned out!

Cloak-bags rifled, and cushions ripped,—
Even an Ensign's wallet stripped!

Even a Methodist hosier's wife
Offered the choice of her Money or Life!

Highwayman's manners no less polite,
Hoped that their coppers (returned) were right;—

Sorry to find the company poor,
Hoped next time they'd travel with more;—

Plucked them all at his ease, in short :—
Such was the '*Plymouth Fly's*' report.

Sympathy! horror! and wonderment!
'Catch the Villain!' (But Nobody went.)

Hosier's wife led into the Bar,
(That 's where the best strong waters are!)

Followed the tale of the hundred-and-one
Things that Somebody ought to have done.

Ensign (of BRAGG's) made a terrible clangour:
But for the Ladies had drawn his hanger!

Robber, of course, was 'BEAU BROCADE';
Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid.

Devonshire DOLLY, plump and red,
Spoke from the gallery overhead ;—

Spoke it out boldly, staring hard :—
'Why didn't you shoot then, GEORGE the Guard?'

Spoke it out bolder, seeing him mute :—
'GEORGE the Guard, why didn't you shoot?'

Portly JOHN grew pale and red,
(JOHN was afraid of her, people said);

Gasped that 'DOLLY was surely cracked'
(JOHN was afraid of her—that 's a fact!)

George the Guard grew red and pale,
Slowly finished his quart of ale:—

'Shoot? Why—Rabbit him!—didn't he shoot?'
Muttered—'The Baggage was far too cute!'

'Shoot? Why, he'd flashed the pan in his eye!'
Muttered—'She'd pay for it by and by!'
Further than this made no reply.

Nor could a further reply be made,
For George *was in league with* 'Beau Brocade'!

And John the Host, in his wakefullest state,
Was not—on the whole—immaculate.

But nobody's virtue was over-nice
When Walpole talked of 'a man and his price';

And wherever Purity found abode,
'Twas certainly *not* on a posting road.

II

'Forty' followed to 'Thirty-nine,'
Glorious days of the *Hanover* line!

Princes were born, and drums were banged;
Now and then batches of Highwaymen hanged.

'Glorious news!'—from the *Spanish Main*;
Porto-Bello at last was ta'en.

'Glorious news!'—for the liquor trade;
Nobody dreamed of 'Beau Brocade'.

People were thinking of *Spanish Crowns*;
Money was coming from seaport towns!

Nobody dreamed of 'Beau Brocade',
(Only Dolly the Chambermaid!)

Blessings on Vernon! Fill up the cans;
Money was coming in '*Flys*' and '*Vans*'.

Possibly, John the Host had heard;
Also, certainly, George the Guard.

And Dolly had possibly tidings, too,
That made her rise from her bed anew,

Plump as ever, but stern of eye,
With a fixed intention to warn the '*Fly*'.

Lingering only at John his door,
Just to make sure of a jerky snore;

Saddling the grey mare, *Dumpling Star*;
Fetching the pistol out of the bar;

(The old horse-pistol that, they say,
Came from the battle of *Malplaquet*;)

Loading with powder that maids would use,
Even in 'Forty', to clear the flues;

And a couple of silver buttons, the Squire
Gave her, away in *Devonshire.*

These she wadded—for want of better—
With the B–SH–P of L–ND–N's 'Pastoral Letter';

Looked to the flint, and hung the whole,
Ready to use, at her pocket-hole.

Thus equipped and accoutred, DOLLY
Clattered away to '*Exciseman's Folly*';—

Such was the name of a ruined abode,
Just on the edge of the *London* road.

Thence she thought she might safely try,
As soon as she saw it, to warn the '*Fly*'.

But, as chance fell out, her rein she drew,
As the BEAU came cantering into the view.

By the light of the moon she could see him drest
In his famous gold-sprigged tambour vest;

And under his silver-grey surtout,
The laced, historical coat of blue,

That he wore when he went to *London-Spaw*,
And robbed Sir MUNGO MUCKLETHRAW.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,
(Trembling a little, but not afraid,)
'Stand and Deliver, O "BEAU BROCADE"!'

But the Beau drew nearer, and would not speak,
For he saw by the moonlight a rosy cheek;

And a spavined mare with a rusty hide;
And a girl with her hand at her pocket-side.

So never a word he spake as yet,
For he thought 'twas a freak of Meg or Bet;—
A freak of the '*Rose*' or the '*Rummer*' set.

Out-spoke Dolly the Chambermaid,
(Tremulous now, and sore afraid,)
'Stand and Deliver, O "Beau Brocade"!'—

Firing then, out of sheer alarm,
Hit the Beau in the bridle-arm.

Button the first went none knows where,
But it carried away his *solitaire*;

Button the second a circuit made,
Glanced in under the shoulder-blade;—
Down from the saddle fell 'Beau Brocade'!

Down from the saddle and never stirred!—
Dolly grew white as a *Windsor* curd.

Slipped not less from the mare, and bound
Strips of her kirtle about his wound.

Then, lest his Worship should rise and flee,
Fettered his ankles—tenderly.

Jumped on his chestnut, BET the fleet
(Called after BET of *Portugal Street*);

Came like the wind to the old Inn-door;—
Roused fat JOHN from a threefold snore;—

Vowed she'd 'peach if he misbehaved . . .
Briefly, the '*Plymouth Fly*' was saved!

Staines and *Windsor* were all on fire:—
DOLLY was wed to a *Yorkshire* squire;
Went to Town at the K—G's desire!

But whether His M–J–STY saw her or not,
HOGARTH jotted her down on the spot;

And something of DOLLY one still may trace
In the fresh contours of his '*Milkmaid's*' face.

GEORGE the Guard fled over the sea:
JOHN had a fit—of perplexity;

Turned King's evidence, sad to state;—
But JOHN was never immaculate.

As for the BEAU, he was duly tried,
When his wound was healed, at *Whitsuntide*;

Served—for a day—as the last of 'sights',
To the world of *St. James's Street* and '*White's*',

Went on his way to TYBURN TREE,
With a pomp befitting his high degree.

Every privilege rank confers:—
Bouquet of pinks at *St. Sepulchre's*;

Flagon of ale at *Holborn Bar*;
Friends (in mourning) to follow his Car—
('t' is omitted where HEROES are!)

Every one knows the speech he made;
Swore that he 'rather admired the Jade!'—

Waved to the crowd with his gold-laced hat:
Talked to the Chaplain after that;

Turned to the Topsman undismayed . . .
This was the finish of 'BEAU BROCADE'!

And this is the Ballad that seemed to hide
In the leaves of a dusty 'LONDONER'S GUIDE';

'*Humbly Inscrib'd (with curls and tails)*
By the Author to FREDERICK, *Prince of* WALES:—

'*Published by* FRANCIS *and* OLIVER PINE;
Ludgate-Hill, at the Blackmoor Sign.
Seventeen-Hundred-and-Thirty-Nine.'

AUSTIN DOBSON.

FALL OF D'ASSAS

Alone through gloomy forest-shades
A soldier went by night;
No moonbeam pierced the dusky glades,
No star shed guiding light.

Yet on his vigil's midnight round
The youth all cheerly passed;
Unchecked by aught of boding sound
That muttered in the blast.

Where were his thoughts that lonely hour?
—In his far home, perchance;
His father's hall, his mother's bower,
'Midst the gay vines of France:

Wandering from battles lost and won,
To hear and bless again
The rolling of the wide Garonne,
Or murmur of the Seine.

Hush! hark! did stealing steps go by?
Came not faint whispers near?
No! the wild wind hath many a sigh,
Amidst the foliage sere.

Hark, yet again!—and from his hand
  What grasp hath wrenched the blade?
—Oh, single 'midst a hostile band,
  Young soldier! thou'rt betrayed!

'Silence!' in undertones they cry,
  'No whisper—not a breath!
The sound that warns thy comrades nigh
  Shall sentence thee to death!'

Still, at the bayonet's point he stood,
  And strong to meet the blow;
And shouted, 'midst his rushing blood,
  'Arm, arm, Auvergne! the foe!'

The stir, the tramp, the bugle-call—
  He heard their tumults grow;
And sent his dying voice through all—
  'Auvergne, Auvergne! the foe!'

F. Hemans.

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, 'If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm.'

Then he said, 'Good night!' and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The *Somerset*, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,

And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, 'All is well!'
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,

Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the
light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,

Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo for evermore!
For, borne on a night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

H. W. Longfellow.

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC

Of Nelson and the North
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone,—
By each gun the lighted brand
In a bold determined hand;
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat
Lay their bulwarks on the brine,
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line:
It was ten of April morn by the chime:
As they drifted on their path
There was silence deep as death,
And the boldest held his breath
For a time.

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene;
And her van the fleeter rushed
O'er the deadly space between.
'Hearts of oak!' our captain cried; when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

Again! again! again!
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back:
Their shots along the deep slowly boom;
Then ceased—and all is wail
As they strike the shattered sail,
Or in conflagration pale
Light the gloom.

Out spoke the victor then
As he hailed them o'er the wave,
'Ye are brothers! ye are men!
And we conquer but to save;
So peace instead of death let us bring:
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet
With the crews at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King.'

Then Denmark blessed our chief
That he gave her wounds repose;
And the sounds of joy and grief
From her people wildly rose,
As death withdrew his shades from the day;
While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

Now joy, Old England, raise
For the tidings of thy might
By the festal cities' blaze,
While the wine-cup shines in light;
And yet, amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep,
Full many a fathom deep,
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!

Brave hearts! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true,
On the deck of fame that died
With the gallant good Riou—
Soft sigh the winds of Heaven o'er their grave!
While the billow mournful rolls
And the mermaid's song condoles,
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave!

T. CAMPBELL.

TRAFALGAR

HEARD ye the thunder of battle
  Low in the South and afar?
Saw ye the flash of the death-cloud
  Crimson on Trafalgar?

Such another day never
  England will look on again,
When the battle fought was the hottest,
  And the hero of heroes was slain!

For the fleet of France and the force of Spain were gather'd for fight,
A greater than Philip their lord, a new Armada in might:—
And the sails were aloft once more in the deep Gaditanian bay,
Where *Redoubtable* and *Bucentaure* and great *Trinidada* lay;

Eager-reluctant to close; for across the bloodshed to be
Two navies beheld one prize in its glory,—the throne of the sea!
Which were bravest, who should tell? for both were gallant and true;
But the greatest seaman was ours, of all that sail'd o'er the blue.

From Cadiz the enemy sallied: they knew not Nelson was there;
His name a navy to us, but to them a flag of despair.
From Ayamonte to Algeziras he guarded the coast,
Till he bore from Tavira south; and they now must fight, or be lost;—
Vainly they steer'd for the Rock and the Midland sheltering sea,
For he headed the Admirals round, constraining them under his lee,
Villeneuve of France, and Gravina of Spain: so they shifted their ground,
They could choose,—they were more than we;—and they faced at Trafalgar round;
Banking their fleet two deep, a fortress-wall thirty-tower'd;
In the midst, four-storied with guns, the dark *Trinidada* lower'd.

So with those.—But meanwhile, as against some dyke that men massively rear,
From on high the torrent surges, to drive through the dyke as a spear,
Eagle-eyed e'en in his blindness, our chief sets his double array,
Making the fleet two spears, to thrust at the foe, any way, . . .

'Anyhow!—without orders, each captain his Frenchman may grapple perforce:
Collingwood first' (yet the *Victory* ne'er a whit slacken'd her course).
'Signal for action! Farewell! we shall win, but we meet not again!'
—Then a low thunder of readiness ran from the decks o'er the main,
And on,—as the message from masthead to masthead flew out like a flame,
'ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY'—they came.

—Silent they come:—While the thirty black forts of the foemen's array
Clothe them in billowy snow, tier speaking o'er tier as they lay;
Flashes that came and went, as swords when the battle is rife;—
But ours stood frowningly smiling, and ready for death as for life.

—O in that interval grim, ere the furies of slaughter embrace,
Thrills o'er each man some far echo of England; some glance of some face!
—Faces gazing seaward through tears from the ocean-girt shore;
Features that ne'er can be gazed on again till the death-pang is o'er. . . .
Lone in his cabin the Admiral kneeling, and all his great heart
As a child's to the mother, goes forth to the loved one, who bade him depart
. . . O not for death, but glory! her smile would welcome him home!
Louder and thicker the thunderbolts fall:—and silent they come.

As when beyond Dongola the lion, whom hunters attack,
Stung by their darts from afar, leaps in, dividing them back;
So between Spaniard and Frenchman the *Victory* wedged with a shout,
Gun against gun; a cloud from her decks and lightning went out;
Iron hailing of pitiless death from the sulphury smoke;
Voices hoarse and parch'd, and blood from invisible stroke.

Each man stood to his work, though his mates fell smitten around,
As an oak of the wood, while his fellow, flame-shattered, besplinters the ground :—
Gluttons of danger for England, but sparing the foe as he lay ;
For the spirit of Nelson was on them, and each was Nelson that day.

'She has struck!'—he shouted. 'She burns, the *Redoubtable!* Save whom we can,
Silence our guns:'—for in him the woman was great in the man,
In that heroic heart each drop girl-gentle and pure,
Dying by those he spared :—and now Death's triumph was sure!
From the deck the smoke-wreath clear'd, and the foe set his rifle in rest,
Dastardly aiming, where Nelson stood forth, with the stars on his breast,—
'In honour I gain'd them, in honour I die with them' . . . Then, in his place,
Fell. . . . 'Hardy! 'tis over; but let them not know': and he cover'd his face.
Silent, the whole fleet's darling they bore to the twilight below:
And above the war-thunder came shouting, as foe struck his flag after foe.

To his heart death rose: and for Hardy, the faithful, he cried in his pain,—
'How goes the day with us, Hardy?'—''Tis ours':—Then he knew, not in vain
Not in vain for his comrades and England he bled: how he left her secure,
Queen of her own blue seas, while his name and example endure.
O, like a lover he loved her! for her as water he pours
Life-blood and life and love, given all for her sake, and for ours!
'Kiss me, Hardy!—Thank God!—I have done my duty!'—And then
Fled that heroic soul, and left not his like among men.

Hear ye the heart of a nation
  Groan, for her saviour is gone;
Gallant and true and tender,
  Child and chieftain in one?
Such another day never
  England will weep for again,
When the triumph darken'd the triumph,
  And the hero of heroes was slain.

F. T. Palgrave.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
  A mile or so away
On a little mound, Napoleon
  Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
  Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
  Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused 'My plans
  That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
  Waver at yonder wall,'—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
  A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
  Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
  And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
  You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
  Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
  Was all but shot in two.

'Well,' cried he, 'Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal 's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!' The Chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The Chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes:
'You're wounded!' 'Nay,' his soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
'I'm killed, Sire!' And his Chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

ROBERT BROWNING.

THE HIGHWAYMAN

I

THE wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch
  of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown
  doeskin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up
  to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
    His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark
  inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all
  was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should
  be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
    Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black
  hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket
  creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white
  and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like
  mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
    The landlord's red-lipped daughter;—
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber
  say—

'One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way.'

He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.

II

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,

A red-coat troop came marching—
        Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
        And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
'Now keep good watch!' and they kissed her.
        She heard the dead man say—
Look for me by moonlight;
        Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!

They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still!

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *tlot-tlot*, in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

He turned; he spurred to the Westward; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, and slowly blanched to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat;

When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding—
Riding—riding—
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard,
And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

ALFRED NOYES.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Half a league, half a league,
  Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said;
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
  Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
  All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
  Noble six hundred!

LORD TENNYSON.

A BALLAD OF JOHN NICHOLSON[1]

It fell in the year of Mutiny,
  At darkest of the night,
John Nicholson by Jalándhar came,
  On his way to Delhi fight.

And as he by Jalándhar came
  He thought what he must do,
And he sent to the Rajah fair greeting,
  To try if he were true.

'God grant your Highness length of days,
  And friends when need shall be;
And I pray you send your Captains hither,
  That they may speak with me.'

[1] Natives of India who live in the Indian fashion and wear Indian shoes remove them when they enter a fellow native's house, and also on official or ceremonious occasions when they enter the house of a European.

On the morrow through Jalándhar town
  The Captains rode in state;
They came to the house of John Nicholson
  And stood before the gate.

The chief of them was Mehtab Singh,
  He was both proud and sly;
His turban gleamed with rubies red,
  He held his chin full high.

He marked his fellows how they put
  Their shoes from off their feet;
'Now wherefore make ye such ado
  These fallen lords to greet?

'They have ruled us for a hundred years,
  In truth I know not how,
But though they be fain of mastery
  They dare not claim it now.'

Right haughtily before them all
  The durbar hall he trod,
With rubies red his turban gleamed,
  His feet with pride were shod.

They had not been an hour together,
  A scanty hour or so,
When Mehtab Singh rose in his place
  And turned about to go.

Then swiftly came John Nicholson
  Between the door and him,
With anger smouldering in his eyes,
  That made the rubies dim.

'You are over-hasty, Mehtab Singh,'—
  Oh, but his voice was low!
He held his wrath with a curb of iron,
  That furrowed cheek and brow.

'You are over-hasty, Mehtab Singh,
  When that the rest are gone,
I have a word that may not wait
  To speak with you alone.'

The Captains passed in silence forth
  And stood the door behind;
To go before the game was played
  Be sure they had no mind.

But there within John Nicholson
  Turned him on Mehtab Singh,
'So long as the soul is in my body
  You shall not do this thing.

'Have ye served us for a hundred years
  And yet ye know not why?
We brook no doubt of our mastery,
  We rule until we die.

'Were I the one last Englishman
  Drawing the breath of life,
And you the master-rebel of all
  That stir this land to strife—

'Were I', he said, 'but a Corporal,
  And you a Rajput King,
So long as the soul was in my body
  You should not do this thing.

'Take off, take off those shoes of pride,
  Carry them whence they came;
Your Captains saw your insolence,
  And they shall see your shame.'

When Mehtab Singh came to the door
  His shoes they burned his hand;
For there in long and silent lines
  He saw the Captains stand.

When Mehtab Singh rode from the gate
  His chin was on his breast:
The Captains said, 'When the strong command
  Obedience is best.'

HENRY NEWBOLT.

THE PIPES AT LUCKNOW

Pipes of the misty moorlands,
  Voice of the glens and hills;
The droning of the torrents,
  The treble of the rills!
Not the braes of broom and heather,
  Nor the mountains dark with rain,
Nor maiden bower, nor border tower,
  Have heard your sweetest strain!

Dear to the Lowland reaper
  And plaided mountaineer,—
To the cottage and the castle
  The Scottish pipes are dear;—
Sweet sounds the ancient pibroch
  O'er mountain, loch, and glade:
But the sweetest of all music
  The pipes at Lucknow played.

Day by day the Indian tiger
  Louder yelled, and nearer crept;
Round and round the jungle-serpent
  Near and nearer circles swept.
'Pray for rescue, wives and mothers,—
  Pray to-day!' the soldier said;
'To-morrow, death 's between us
  And the wrong and shame we dread.'

Oh, they listened, looked, and waited,
  Till their hope became despair;
And the sobs of low bewailing
  Filled the pauses of their prayer.
Then up spake a Scottish maiden,
  With her ear unto the ground:
'Dinna ye hear it?—dinna ye hear it?
  The pipes o' Havelock sound!'

Hushed the wounded man his groaning;
  Hushed the wife her little ones;
Alone they heard the drum-roll
  And the roar of Sepoy guns.
But to sounds of home and childhood
  The Highland ear was true;—
As her mother's cradle-crooning
  The mountain pipes she knew.

Like the march of soundless music
  Through the vision of the seer,
More of feeling than of hearing,
  Of the heart than of the ear,
She knew the droning pibroch,
  She knew the Campbell's call:
'Hark! hear ye no' MacGregor's,
  The grandest o' them all!'

Oh, they listened, dumb and breathless,
  And they caught the sound at last;
Faint and far beyond the Goomtee
  Rose and fell the piper's blast!

Then a burst of wild thanksgiving
  Mingled woman's voice and man's;
'God be praised!—the march of Havelock!
  The piping of the clans!'

Louder, nearer, fierce as vengeance,
  Sharp and shrill as swords at strife,
Came the wild MacGregor's clan-call,
  Stinging all the air to life.
But when the far-off dust-cloud
  To plaided legions grew,
Full tenderly and blithesomely
  The pipes of rescue blew!

Round the silver domes of Lucknow,
  Moslem mosque and Pagan shrine,
Breathed the air to Britons dearest,
  The air of Auld Lang Syne.
O'er the cruel roll of war-drums
  Rose that sweet and homelike strain;
And the tartan clove the turban,
  As the Goomtee cleaves the plain.

Dear to the corn-land reaper
  And plaided mountaineer,—
To the cottage and the castle
  The piper's song is dear.
Sweet sounds the Gaelic pibroch
  O'er mountain, glen, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
  The Pipes at Lucknow played!

J. G. Whittier.

THE LAST REDOUBT

Kacelyevo's slope still felt
The cannon's bolt and the rifle's pelt;
For a last redoubt up the hill remained,
By the Russ yet held, by the Turk not gained.

Mehemet Ali stroked his beard;
His lips were clenched and his look was weird,
Round him were ranks of his ragged folk,
Their faces blackened with blood and smoke.

'Clear me the Muscovite out!' he cried.
Then the name of 'Allah!' echoed wide,
And the rifles were clutched and the bayonets lowered,
And on to the last redoubt they poured.

One fell, and a second quickly stopped
The gap that he left when he reeled and dropped;
The second,—a third straight filled his place;
The third,—and a fourth kept up the race.

Many a fez in the mud was crushed,
Many a throat that cheered was hushed,
Many a heart that sought the crest
Found Allah's throne and a houri's breast.

Over their corpses the living sprang,
And the ridge with their musquet-rattle rang,
Till the faces that lined the last redoubt
Could see their faces and hear their shout.

In the redoubt a fair form towered,
That cheered up the brave and chid the coward;
Brandishing blade with a gallant air,
His head erect and his bosom bare.

'Fly! they are on us!' his men implored;
But he waved them on with his waving sword.
'It cannot be held; 'tis no shame to go!'
But he stood with his face set hard to the foe.

Then clung they about him, and tugged, and knelt.
He drew a pistol from out his belt,
And fired it blank at the first that set
Foot on the edge of the parapet.

Over that first one toppled; but on
Clambered the rest till their bayonets shone,
As hurriedly fled his men dismayed,
Not a bayonet's length from the length of his blade.

'Yield!' But aloft his steel he flashed,
And down on their steel it ringing clashed;
Then back he reeled with a bladeless hilt,
His honour full, but his life-blood spilt.

Mehemet Ali came and saw
The riddled breast and the tender jaw.
'Make him a bier of your arms,' he said,
'And daintily bury this dainty dead!'

They lifted him up from the dabbled ground;
His limbs were shapely, and soft, and round.
No down on his lip, on his cheek no shade:—
'Bismillah!' they cried, ''tis an Infidel maid!'

'Dig her a grave where she stood and fell,
'Gainst the jackal's scratch and the vulture's smell.
Did the Muscovite men like their maidens fight,
In their lines we had scarcely supped to-night.'

So a deeper trench 'mong the trenches there
Was dug, for the form as brave as fair;
And none, till the Judgement trump and shout,
Shall drive her out of the Last Redoubt.

Alfred Austin.

RAMON

(Refugio Mine, Northern Mexico)

Drunk and senseless in his place,
Prone and sprawling on his face,
More like brute than any man
Alive or dead,—

By his great pump out of gear,
Lay the peon engineer,
Waking only just to hear,
Overhead,
Angry tones that called his name,
Oaths and cries of bitter blame—
Woke to hear all this, and, waking, turned and fled!

'To the man who'll bring to me,'
Cried Intendant Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
'Bring the sot alive or dead,
I will give to him', he said,
'Fifteen hundred *pesos* down,
Just to set the rascal's crown
Underneath this heel of mine:
Since but death
Deserves the man whose deed,
Be it vice or want of heed,
Stops the pumps that give us breath,—
Stops the pumps that suck the death
From the poisoned lower levels of the mine!'

No one answered; for a cry
From the shaft rose up on high,
And shuffling, scrambling, tumbling from below,
Came the miners each, the bolder,
Mounting on the weaker's shoulder,
Grappling, clinging to their hold or
Letting go,

As the weaker gasped and fell
From the ladder to the well,—
To the poisoned pit of hell
Down below!

'To the man who sets them free,'
Cried the foreman, Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
'Brings them out and sets them free,
I will give that man', said he,
'Twice that sum, who with a rope
Face to face with Death shall cope.
Let him come who dares to hope!'
'Hold your peace!' some one replied,
Standing by the foreman's side;
'There has one already gone, whoe'er he be!'

Then they held their breath with awe,
Pulling on the rope, and saw
Fainting figures reappear,
On the black rope swinging clear,
Fastened by some skilful hand from below;
Till a score the level gained,
And but one alone remained,—
He the hero and the last,
He whose skilful hand made fast
The long line that brought them back to hope and cheer!

Haggard, gasping, down dropped he
At the feet of Harry Lee,—

Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine.
  'I have come', he gasped, 'to claim
  Both rewards. Señor, my name
    Is Ramon!
  I'm the drunken engineer,
  I'm the coward, Señor—' Here
  He fell over, by that sign,
    Dead as stone!

BRET HARTE.

GUILD'S SIGNAL

[William Guild was engineer of a train which plunged into Meadow Brook, on the line of the Stonington and Providence Railroad. It was his custom, as often as he passed his home, to whistle an 'All 's well' to his wife. He was found after the disaster, dead, with his hand on the throttle-valve of his engine.—B. H.]

Two low whistles, quaint and clear,
That was the signal the engineer—
  That was the signal that Guild, 'tis said—
Gave to his wife at Providence,
As through the sleeping town, and thence,
      Out in the night,
      On to the light,
  Down past the farms, lying white, he sped!

As a husband's greeting, scant, no doubt,
Yet to the woman looking out,
  Watching and waiting, no serenade,
Love song, or midnight roundelay

Said what that whistle seemed to say:
'To my trust true,
So love to you!
Working or waiting, good night!' it said.

Brisk young bagmen, tourists fine,
Old commuters along the line,
Brakemen and porters glanced ahead,
Smiled as the signal, sharp, intense,
Pierced through the shadows of Providence:
'Nothing amiss—
Nothing!—it is
Only Guild calling his wife,' they said.

Summer and winter the old refrain
Rang o'er the billows of ripening grain,
Pierced through the budding boughs o'erhead,
Flew down the track when the red leaves burned
Like living coals from the engine spurned;
Sang as it flew:
'To our trust true,
First of all, duty. Good night!' it said.

And then, one night, it was heard no more
From Stonington over Rhode Island shore,
And the folk in Providence smiled and said
As they turned in their beds, 'The engineer
Has once forgotten his midnight cheer.'
One only knew,
To his trust true,
Guild lay under his engine dead.—BRET HARTE.

A BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

KAMAL is out with twenty men to raise the Border-side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.

Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
'Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?'
Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar:
'If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.

At dusk he harries the Abazai—at dawn he is into Bonair,
But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,
So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
By the favour of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai.
But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain are sown with Kamal's men.
There is rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen.'

The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell and the head of the gallows-tree.
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat—
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,

Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
'Ye shoot like a soldier,' Kamal said. 'Show now if ye can ride.'
It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.
They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course—in a woful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand—small room was there to strive,—

'Twas only by favour of mine', quoth he, 'ye rode so long alive:
There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a row:
If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly.'
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: 'Do good to bird and beast,
But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.
They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain,
The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
But if thou thinkest the price be fair,—thy brethren wait to sup,
The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn,—howl, dog, and call them up!

And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!'
Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.
'No talk shall be of dogs,' said he, 'when wolf and grey wolf meet.
May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?'
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: 'I hold by the blood of my clan:
Take up the mare for my father's gift—by God, she has carried a man!'
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast,
'We be two strong men,' said Kamal then, 'but she loveth the younger best.
So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain.'
The Colonel's son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,
'Ye have taken the one from a foe,' said he; 'will ye take the mate from a friend?'
'A gift for a gift,' said Kamal straight; 'a limb for the risk of a limb.

Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!'
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest—
He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
'Now here is thy master,' Kamal said, 'who leads a troop of the Guides,
And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.
Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
Thy life is his—thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
So, thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line,
And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power—
Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur.'

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,

On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.
The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear—
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
'Ha' done! ha' done!' said the Colonel's son. 'Put up the steel at your sides!
Last night ye had struck at a Border thief—to-night 'tis a man of the Guides!'

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

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